



Hampton Roads Chapter of ASPA

1990, 1992, 1993 & 1998 Newsletter Award Recipient

August 2001

ASPA Chapter Officers 2001-2002

President

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Day Chair)
Sylvia Hill
Jerry Hoddinott (Marketing Chair)
Dr. William Leavitt
Dr. Berhanu Mengistu
Terry Moore
Earl Sorey
Erica Woods-Warrior (Student Rep.)

General Membership Luncheon Meeting

Date

Thursday, September 20, 2001

Location

Quality Inn & Suites and Conference Center
1809 W. Mercury Blvd. (I-64 Mercury Blvd.
north exit; hotel will be on right)
Hampton, VA
757-838-5011

Time

Registration/Networking: 11:30a.m.
Luncheon/Program: 12:00p.m.

Speaker

Art Collins, Director, Hampton Roads
Planning District Commission

Cost

Advanced Registration

\$15 for ASPA members/non-members
\$13 for students
NO SHOWS WILL BE BILLED

On-Site Registration

\$20 for ASPA members/non-members
\$15 for students

Registration

Look for a registration form in the mail or
register on-line at
www.hampton.gov/budget/aspa

For More Information Contact

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President's Message

By Joyce Heffington

As incoming President for our chapter, I was invited to attend the local conference of the Conference of Minority Public Administrators (COMPA) last month. I thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity to meet and network with members of this section. I also learned a great deal from my two days at the conference. The theme of the conference was "Opportunities Unlimited." The Friday morning speaker, Ms. Carla N. Archie, Esquire, Assistant District Attorney for Charlotte, North Carolina spoke on this theme. Ms. Archie gave us pointers for making the most of opportunities: assess the situation; be honest rather than politically correct; look at where you are and where you have been; have the courage to try something different and make things better; exercise vision and practicality.

Webster defines an opportunity as "a favorable or promising combination of circumstances; a chance for advancement or improvement." Ms. Archie suggested a better definition might be "the distance between reality and possibility." I like her definition.

This year I see a great distance between where we are (reality) and where we can be (possibility). I am going to ask our council to work with me to try some different things to try to make our chapter better. I would like for our chapter to work more closely with our local sections and universities. There are a number of opportunities to make our chapter better, and in so doing provide better service to our public. But it takes people who are not afraid to get involved to make this difference.

With the new ideas that our council has, we need more of our members to get involved to help out. Someone once said you only get as good as you give. If you want a better chapter, you need to

help make it better. It was scary for me to get involved with our chapter activities the first time. I was rather new and did not know many people. But it was very fulfilling and rewarding once I did. Ms. Archie defined courage as "not lack of fear, but the ability to overcome it." **Do you have the courage to become involved, to take the opportunity to help make our chapter better?**

Sincerely,
Joyce Heffington, President



Members' Corner

New Jobs/Promotions/Awards

Congratulations to **Erica Woods-Warrior**, a graduate student in Public Administration at Old Dominion University and the Chapter's Student Representative, who was recently awarded the **COMPA Scholarship**, the **Constance Fellowship** and the **NFBPA 2001 Forum Scholarship**.

Congratulations to **Leslie Beauregard**, City of Hampton, who was recently promoted to Sr. Management and Legislative Analyst within the Office of Budget and Management Analysis.

Congratulations to **Sheila Guy**, a brand new ASPA member, who has been nominated to serve as Treasurer for the Hampton Roads Chapter of COMPA during 2001-2002.

Have news that you want to share with fellow chapter members? Please contact [Leslie Beauregard](#), E-Newsletter Editor, if you would like to contribute to the Members' Corner.

Events Calendar

Hampton Roads Chapter of ASPA *Schedule of Events*

September 20, 2001 - General membership meeting, Quality Inn, Hampton, VA

October 26, 2001 - ASPA Sponsored Student Day - "Public Service: How Will You Contribute?"

November 15, 2001 - General membership meeting, Harbor Park, Hits at the Park Restaurant

January 17, 2002 - General membership meeting, Harbor Park, Hits at the Park Restaurant

March 21, 2002 - Professional Development Day

May 9, 2002 - Annual Awards Luncheon

Hampton Roads Chapter of ASPA Update

by Joyce Heffington

On July 10th our Council had our first meeting of the year. We met our new Conference of Minority Public Administrators (COMPA) President, Mr. Lawsey Thomas of the City of Newport News, our new Treasurer, Dr. Stephen King of Regent University, our new council member, Dr. Peter Carlson of Christopher Newport University, and our new student representative Ms. Erica Woods-Warrior of Old Dominion University. It was a very productive meeting in planning new and exciting things for our chapter this year. We will have our traditional lunches on the third Thursday in September, November, and January scheduled at Quality Inn in Hampton and Harbor Park in

Norfolk. On the third Thursday in March we will host Professional Development Day,

tentatively scheduled to be at the Sheraton at the Oceanfront. On the third Thursday in May we

will have our annual awards lunch and may be adding a new award category! We are looking for a special location for this event and will keep you posted.

Hampton Roads COMPA is a section of the Hampton Roads Chapter of ASPA. Both organizations have made a commitment to work together. COMPA's meetings are on the third Thursday of the months that we don't meet starting in October. I want to encourage you to attend the COMPA events listed on our calendar of events for the year. I attended their annual conference in June and found it to be both informative and enjoyable! I have asked COMPA to present the afternoon session of our Professional Development Day. I look forward to what they have to share with us!

Our council agreed that we need to do more to assist our student members and to solicit more students to join ASPA. We are looking for students at each of our colleges or universities who would be willing to serve as our "Ambassadors." We would like those "Ambassadors" to encourage their fellow students to join ASPA (we will provide you with membership packages to distribute) and invite them to attend our events. If you are interested, please contact our student representative Ms. Erica Woods-Warrior at ejwarrior@hotmail.com.

Another way council felt we could assist our student members was to provide a student development day. This will be held October 26, 2001. We will be offering juniors, seniors and graduate students a chance to find out from Top Leaders in all levels of government and non-profit organizations how to build a successful career in public service. More details will be provided soon. Our student representative volunteered to head up this special event.

As was previously mentioned, we will be having two annual events, Professional Development

Day and the Awards Luncheon in March and May, respectively. We have a full committee for planning the Awards Luncheon, but we are in need of members for the Professional Development Day Committee. If you are interested in volunteering to plan this important event, please contact our Professional Development Day Chair, Pete Carlson at pcarlson@cnu.edu.

Our President-Elect, Leslie Beauregard, is planning our general membership luncheon meetings this year. If you have an interesting topic for her to use or know of a good speaker who might be available, please let her know at lbeauregard@hampton.gov.

Diversity Training: More than just a lesson in tolerance

By Erica Woods-Warrior, Old Dominion University

I can remember, from childhood, my mother's response whenever I pointed out someone who was different or, in my elementary-school opinion, "weird". "It takes all kinds", she would say, admonishing me for staring or making remarks aloud.

As a diversity trainer for the public and private sector, I have become acutely aware of the logic in my mother's reasoning. Indeed, it does "take all kinds" of people to comprise any successful group of people. There is much to be said for an organization filled with a variety of men and women of different races, ethnicities, ages and cultures. Where is it that we first learn that "different" is synonymous with "substandard"? This way of thinking was the foundation for pre-civil rights slavery and plagues our society today with inequities and bigotry. The same mentality prevails at the root of the school-house bullying that has led to school violence.

When "diversity", "multi-cultural", and "ethnic" became tag words of the late 1980s and early nineties, our nation experienced an explosion of political correctness. Black people became "African-Americans", and America's more open-minded citizens chanted mantras of "color-blindness" (i.e. when I look at a person, I don't see color; I just see the individual"). Colleges and universities went to great lengths to reprint their catalogs and brochures; the new covers displayed a virtual rainbow of ethnic representatives-- one Asian-American, one African-American, one European American, and sometimes a Native American Indian for good measure. Campus and community activities were advertised as non-denominational and every major organization and institution erected a 'multicultural affairs' department or committee.

As the late 90's approached, these fallacies in the "melting pot" mentality were illuminated by a resurgence of discrimination and sexual harassment complaints. Headlines like "Cigarette firms accused of targeting minority markets unfairly" filled the newspapers.

When I began a career in diversity training, I realized it would be a complex field to enter; not only because of the nature of the work, but also because of the preconceptions others have about diversity. Although willing to allocate budget funds for diversity training, many organizations are actually seeking "tolerance training". This fact became apparent in the instructions some organizations gave me; there were limits on how intense a session could become, limits on how much discussion could be had on race issues. Some even offered their own framework for the seminars in order to prevent excess discretionary power in my training techniques.

Today's public sector workforce, much like the private sector, is no longer satisfied with racial tolerance training or sexual harassment prevention. Instead, they are demanding that

diversity be embraced and appreciated, not merely tolerated. They are demanding a restructuring of organizational values. Key to this new value system is the realization that differences do not constitute weakness in the organizational structure. On the contrary, diversity can bring to an organization better perspective, improved problem-solving, and even more efficient policy-making. How can I make such a bold presumption? Let's take a simple analogy. Consider a group of architects sitting down to the drawing board to develop a construction plan. They will exhaust their own creative capacity to develop a design. Then they must consult with plumbers, electricians, and others to determine feasibility, potential obstacles and other alternatives to the original design. The individuals are limited in their perspective and areas of expertise and their experiences are also limited. Combining their skills and backgrounds, however, increases their ability to see the design from all perspectives. The same is true in any organization; increased perspective almost always results in a more thorough examination and, subsequently, a more confident decision. For example, how much perspective can a group of upper-class, middle-aged, non-minority men give to the issue of welfare? Now consider the additional perspective if that group were to also include single parents, racial minorities, and women.

In keeping with the trend of making government more 'business-like', perhaps the time has come for the public sector to move beyond the bare minimum of EEO standards and tolerance campaigns. After all, even such weighty traditions as standardized testing are being reevaluated to account for a more diverse population. Isn't it time that the public sector started keeping up with the times, as well? But, let the buyer beware: diversity cannot be taught; rather, it must be instituted and then cultivated. Diversity trainers, like EEO counselors, cannot make any lasting changes within an organization without the individuals' and the organizations' commitment to consider change in their core

values.

Diversity Training Enhances Teamwork

**By Lawsey Thomas, Safety and Training
Administrator and Dee Bryant, Management
Analyst, City of Newport News**

About two years ago, Reed Fowler, Director of Public Works in Newport News, Virginia, began a team-building exercise for his employees, whose input would further lead to Diversity Training for Public Works as well as the Fire Department and the Department of Social Services. According to Fowler, "It is a wonderful management tool. I have had numerous employees express their appreciation for having such a dynamic program in place. It promotes a greater understanding of our differences and enhances teamwork, both at the same time."

To launch the Diversity Training program, Assistant Director Eric Lamberton coordinated the concept with Dr. Carolyn Hines and William Hines of the consulting firm, C&W Associates, Inc., a Newport News, Virginia based, human resources development corporation. The firm specializes in alternate dispute resolution, executive coaching, management consulting and training, organizational development, team building and transformational leadership. To customize the course material, a focus group was formed, consisting of two members from each of the three participating City departments. Working with this group, Dr. Hines and Mr. Hines performed a needs assessment and formed a Diversity Training plan. The goal of the course was to make the participants aware of diversity, not only in the workplace, but also its effects on work production, socialization and overall employee morale. Specific areas covered in the class were an outgrowth of focus group

concerns.

Based on the focus group concerns, the course was designed to help participants understand and appreciate diversity in the workplace through exercises in cross-cultural communication skills. Course objectives included several behaviors participants could expect to achieve. These behaviors included:

- ❖ Becoming more comfortable in a diverse work environment
- ❖ Understanding the value of diversity both in the workforce and the City of Newport News
- ❖ Increased knowledge of the awareness-choice-change model
- ❖ Improved communication skills based on Caring Competencies
- ❖ More effective teamwork across cultural lines
- ❖ Understanding the potential impact of early stereotypes and biases on communications

Classes of twenty-five employees each were formed from diverse groups, and both training and conversation were centered on the effects of diversity in the workplace. After a test case was designed utilizing a focus group consisting of two employees from each department, Lawsey Thomas, Safety and Training Administrator, set up a monthly training schedule and the interdepartmental classes began. Throughout the program, evaluations were collected from all participants as a means of feedback.

An overwhelming majority of evaluations rated the program as very helpful or extremely helpful. The following is a sample of responses on evaluations asking participants to identify the most helpful part of the work session:

"This class was great for making you take the time to step back and look at different topics, not only from your point of view, but from how other people might look at them".

"Learning about what offends people".

"Bringing awareness about the way things are in today's society. One of the best classes that I have attended in the F. D. [Fire Department]"

"Bringing out some bias within myself."

"Learning the techniques to handle situations of conflict."

"... We were able to discuss very controversial topics and examine how others feel..."

As of July 2001, more than 200 Public Works employees, or approximately 67% of the department's personnel have received Diversity Training. The department plans to continue the training on a quarterly basis, with the goal of training 100% of the current workforce as well as newly hired personnel. Continued participation of other City departments is anticipated and welcome, according to Lawsey Thomas, who continues to coordinate and schedule diverse groups for this training. For more information on the services of the consulting firm of C.W. Hines and Associates, Inc., 54 Dillwyn Drive, Newport News, VA 23602, please contact Dr. Carolyn Hines or Mr. William Hines at (757) 874-7208.

International Conference on Public Management, Policy and Development Governance and Sustainable Development: Promoting Collaborative Partnerships

**by Dr. Berhanu Mengistu, Ph.D. Program Director
at the Graduate Center for Urban Studies and
Public Administration, College of Business and
Public Administration at Old Dominion
University**

I recently returned from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where I was instrumental in coordinating and conducting the third International Conference on

Public Management, Policy and Development. The conference was the third of its kind and is held in a different African national capital city of historical significance every two years. The previous two conferences were held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1997, the last African nation to gain its independence and in Accra, Ghana in 1999, the first African nation to be liberated from the bondage of colonialism. Ethiopia, the site of the June 2001 conference, is the only nation in Africa to successfully resist total colonization (Readers may recall that the province of Eritrea was occupied by Italy for a number of decades.) despite numerous attempts by several European powers.

The conference was host to more than three hundred fifty participants from around the world. More than 80 were U.S. participants and dozens of them were students from various public administration, public affairs, urban services and public policy graduate programs. Four Old Dominion University Students sponsored by the Graduate Center for Urban Studies and Public Administration, College of Business and Public Administration, and Study Abroad Programs attended and presented papers. The conference was held at the United Nations Conference Center and hosted by the UN Economic Commission for Africa. The conference format included distinguished keynote speakers of international renown, concurrent sessions, workshops and working groups.

The conference keynote speaker for the opening session was Dr. Negasso Gidada, President of Ethiopia. The focus of the conference was on the exchange of ideas, expertise and models for sustainable development and policy. Topics included civil service reform, good governance, public budgeting, conflict resolution, a variety of technology transfers, public and private health issues and systems, agricultural policy, education, gender issues in public participation, and the expansion of women's roles in policy making.

In addition to the remarks of President Gidada, keynote speakers from the Organization for African Unity and other high-ranking non-governmental and government officials addressed the conferees. President Gidada articulated several government reforms that the nation is currently addressing, and conference topics paralleled several of these issues including Good Governance, civil service reform, and HIV/AIDS policy implementation.

A reception hosted for conferees by U. S. Ambassador and Mrs. Nagy at the ambassador's residence in Addis Ababa was a social highlight. Educational City, Country and Continental tours were taken by many of the conference attendees after the conclusion of the conference.

Participants formed ongoing working groups among African and American professionals to assure the continuity and application of both theory and practice in specific areas of interests. I was fortunate enough to be able to remain in Addis Ababa an additional week after the conference to lecture at Addis Ababa University and meet with various officials to assure that the work begun by the conference will continue to have an effect in actual practice.